

# Stray thoughts

Autor(en): **Kyburg**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1930)**

Heft 440

PDF erstellt am: **06.08.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-690462>

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## Stray Thoughts.

By KYBURG.

In opening its columns to reports of the doings of Swiss Communities in Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and other places in these Islands, the *Swiss Observer* helps many of us to remember the existence of those other Swiss Colonies in Great Britain and, now and again, we find among the names published one of an old personal friend and am glad of it.

The *Swiss Observer* knits the Swiss Colonies in Great Britain more closely together. That is all for the good and I cannot quite see by what other agency the same result could be achieved equally well.

Ruminating on this matter I found myself straying to contemplating the wider aspects of Nationalism, especially as far as it affects those living away from their country. And the old question of how far Nationalism or Patriotism, as understood by most of us, ought to be cultivated arose once again before me.

I cannot claim to be able to give a satisfactory answer to this question which, I am quite sure, must affect very many of us Swiss living abroad, especially those living permanently abroad.

True and burning love for our mother-country or, as we more virile Swiss prefer to call it, our "fatherland" can never fade in our hearts. That much, I know. This may be due to atavism or to some biological phenomenon connected with our early feeding—for, are we not earthly and destined to return to the dust from which we came? I am not equipped to decide the reason of it. Let's, therefore, be content to note the fact.

As we grow older, however, there is, at least as far as my own personal experience goes, a distinct feeling which makes us, at times, rebel against the narrow patriotism which would have it that the hazard of birth-locality should determine, once and for all time, one's allegiance to a given country, or district, or village, or even street, may house! Or, perhaps, I should express myself differently and say that I rather feel that the time has come when we should begin to enlarge our "patriotic horizon" and think of our selves, not merely as Swiss, but as Europeans. We should then think of our birthplace, or the country of our birth, in the same way, as a Bernese living in, say, Winterthur, thinks of his native canton. We would call ourselves Swiss, would have our Swiss Societies, the same as they have a Berner Verein in Winterthur, but, always and in the first place, we would, if anyone asked us, say that we are European!

I do not preach, as my readers will observe, abnegation of local patriotism, nor do I recommend that hybridisation which is called "nationalisation." I simply widen the frontiers, enlarge the horizon, envisage a *Europe* as a *Country* of which we all ought to be proud to be members. I even leave the political organisation of this *Country of Europe* untouched for the moment.

Europe to-day presents to my mind a very similar spectacle to Switzerland in the 18th century. Then we had a conglomeration of variously governed states, of different faiths, of different languages, of different political views, but they were known as Switzerland. They were, perhaps, not very powerful when they had to face foreign enemies. Their weakness was due precisely to the different political systems under which they lived together and to the different faiths and views they possessed but did not share.

Similar conditions are to be found to-day when we look at Europe as an entity. One thing the Swiss of those times did possess, is lacking in Europe to-day, namely, they had a close understanding, amounting almost to law as regards their armed forces. And yet, as late as the 19th century, to wit in 1917, that unity as regards the armed forces, was split for a time and Swiss army marched against Swiss army in open warfare.

Signs are not wanting that far-seeing statesmen of to-day are working with all their might towards guiding Europe to unity. It is a sign of the interdependence of our commercial relations that the most important thing to be achieved seems to be the abolition of commercial barriers still existing between the various countries which one day ought to form one country called Europe.

This is not the place, nor have I the qualifications to air my own views on this matter. I merely point to the fact.

Another sign, tending towards the same aim, I think, is the Naval Conference now sitting in London. And here I venture a prophesy: Mr. Ramsay Macdonald has been blamed by many who are justly appalled by the terrible unemployment figures, of "dallying" with this Naval Disarmament Conference. Many, otherwise quite intelligent people, have no faith in the ultimate triumph of Peace over War and they, consequently, deride all such efforts as this Naval Conference as doomed to failure. They say, that Mr. Ramsay Macdonald would have served his Country very much better if he had tackled unemployment instead!

Well, I rather think that History, i.e. those judges of present events who will chronicle them in fifty or a hundred years' time, will describe Ramsay Macdonald's efforts in connection with the Naval Disarmament Conference as the finest thing any statesman has attempted for a very long time and as the most beneficial to mankind.

We ordinary citizens, beset by our own peculiar and particular worries, striving to keep the wolf from the door which shelters our family, busily engaged by those efforts at making ends meet and providing for a rainy day, we are much too much immersed in our petty troubles and our hectic escapes therefrom to take a long view of matters which really do affect mankind, including ourselves, in the long run. We delegate that task to our Statesmen. We grumble at our Statesmen very often, nay mostly, because we cannot understand what they are doing! We cannot see far ahead as they have to do! We very often cannot and will not take the trouble to do so. And, we are content to grouse and to lament the bad times we are passing through and to trust to the future!

A moment's reflection would convince us, I think, that if that future is to be an improvement of the present, we must look to our Statesmen, those men whom we accuse of all sorts of insincerity, incapacity, carpet-bagging and what not! to guide the destinies of the various States in such a manner as will bring about, by and by, better conditions. And, as I have said above, the interdependence, not only commercially but also in many other fields of human endeavour and thought, is such between the various States that the striving after unification must surely and inevitably become one of the chief efforts of wide-awake Statesmen, who, by virtue of their exceptional training, by virtue also of their quite exceptional facilities for getting all helpful information digested, are alone capable of achieving steps which may bring us gradually nearer that desirable and desired goal.

From this it follows, I think, forcibly and clearly that it is our own duty to think occasionally of these matters. If we go through life, indifferent to the aims Statesmen strive to achieve, if we are content to grouse over their temporary failures to belittle their achievements and to shrug our shoulders and exclaim, as so many do, that we are not interested in politics and leave that to the over-ambitious and to those who prefer shouting in the market place to honest working, well, then we cannot feel that we are doing our own little bit towards making this world of ours a better place to live in than it is now.

On the other hand, if we take an intelligent interest in these high endeavours, if we try honestly and fearlessly to understand the aims for which we *Europeans* ought to strive, we produce in our own little sphere of influence at home, among our circle of friends a more suitable atmosphere for the discussion of such problems and, by and by, a more fertile soil for the seeds of the new *Doctrine of European Unification* to grow in.

There is one little hint which may be usefully remembered when you try to think of other Nationals as fellow-Europeans, that is as co-members of the same large State which is your state.

Have you ever met a man whom you may have seen often and of whom, before you ever spoke to him, you thought, judging by his appearance, what a disagreeable old chap he must be? And, upon being introduced to him, have you not been greatly surprised by his charm of manner, by his erudition, by his being a jolly good old sort? In short, have you ever found out how utterly mistaken your first impression was? I have, and often.

Well, remember this when you think of the members of a Nation in Europe you perhaps dislike utterly. Try to remember that they too are sons of mothers, that they too are sweethearts, fathers, brothers, sisters, etc., and that they too are subject to the same noble feelings as you fancy you harbour in your own heart. And remember that those you think you dislike, before you know them better, may be quite as charming as your best friends.

I do hope our Editor will find space for this little homily because the thoughts I have tried to express are thoughts which have occurred to me often and because I feel that unless we can cultivate that sense of wider Patriotism in Europe, that unless we can bring ourselves to think more as Europeans than as Swiss, British, French, etc., our Statesmen will work under difficulties which we could very well, and ought to, take off their path.

A unified Europe need not mean and would not mean that the individual Nationalities composing it would tend to fade out. Ask a Bernese whether the Bernese character is likely to become less Bernese because he is a Swiss? I leave the question as to whether a unified European Character might not be better unanswered.

It has often been said and been demonstrated that it may be misleading to apply deductions from the small instance to the big problem. All the same, we Swiss, knowing how different



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nationalities, different faiths, different languages live amicably together in our own beloved country, will be able to think of a Europe in which all Europeans with their different characteristics and their different ways of expressing themselves will be able to live as members of one happy and united family. United, yes, and in spite of temporary family squabbles! Surely it is time that in a big family like Europe all family quarrels be settled "out of court" that is, without having recourse to the arbitrament of the sword!

#### SWISS PAINTER IN IRELAND.

On Monday, March 3rd, His Excellency the Governor-General and Mrs. MacNeil attended a private view of sculpture by Mrs. S. R. Praeger, H.R.H.A., and paintings by Hans Iten in the Mills Hall, Dublin, the public exhibition of which was continued until the 15th.

Mr. Iten, a native of Switzerland, has lived in this country for nearly 34 years. Flowers from the still life and landscapes are his subjects and the exhibition includes a number of pictures of this character. Of the former, No. 44, "Peonies," is a fine example. The brilliant colours and natural setting of the flowers in a round vase gives dignity and beauty to the picture.

The landscapes are of Ireland and Switzerland. The method of execution of the former shows that the long period he has lived here has enabled him to grasp the Irish atmosphere.

*Irish Independent.*

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The "Union" Company was founded in 1907 by the present director, Mr. G. Brandenberger. Its aim is to supply its members with goods that are of good quality at moderate prices. Food-stuffs and other goods required by members are imported straight from all parts of the world. Owners of open retail shops only can become members of the company.

##### SWISS HOLDING COMPANY.

In order to co-ordinate its several foreign manufacturing and trading interests, and with a view to their further development, the Polyphonwerke A.G. (Polyphone Works, Ltd.) has formed a holding company in Switzerland under the name of "Polyphon-Holding Aktiengesellschaft," domiciled at Bale.

The first directors of the Polyphon-Holding A.G. are Siegfried Goldschmidt, manager of the Schweizerische Credit-Anstalt, Bale, as president, Dr. Peter Schmid, lawyer, Bale, and Bruno Borchardt, managing director of the Polyphonwerke A.G., Berlin.

#### MUST A MAN BE BURIED?

The disciples of Rudolf Maria Holzapfel, a sort of social prophet, who died at Berne on February 8, refuse to have him buried or cremated. His corpse was mummified and is to remain laid out in state in the temple of his sect.

Holzapfel exercised a marked influence, especially on the younger generation, by his book, "Pan-Ideal," in which he tries to create a deeper and more active social and religious life. He made his "studies" in the slums of London, South Africa, and Russia, and spent his later years in Switzerland.

It is not yet known whether legal steps will be taken against his disciples, as Swiss law requests a "decent burial" for everybody.

#### FRICK'S ENGLISH HOTEL INSTITUTE, ZURICH.

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## Doings in Our Colony.

### CITY SWISS CLUB.

Le City Swiss Club a donné sa dernière soirée dansante de la saison samedi passé, 22 mars, au May Fair Hotel. Soirée brillamment réussie, dont le succès remarquable et révélateur dépassa encore celui de la soirée précédente au même hotel un mois auparavant.

Il faut dire que le May Fair Hotel avait bien fait les choses. Quant à notre ami, Signor Emilio Colombo, dont les productions furent chaleureusement applaudies, et à son excellent orchestre, ils n'ont, certes, plus besoin qu'on les loue.

Cependant, une grande part du succès revient incontestablement aux participants eux-mêmes, en particulier aux dames, dont les jolies toilettes s'accordent à merveille avec l'aspect printanier du "Jardin" du May Fair. Il y a un mois, nous étions 139, samedi passé 166. Vraiment, les échos de la soirée de février s'étaient portés bien loin et si l'enchantement de samedi se propage à son tour, ces soirées dansantes vont assumer, en affluence, les proportions du grand banquet annuel; il faudra alors abandonner le "Jardin" et retenuir pour 1931 le grand salon, plus magnifique encore, réservé pour cette fonction le 28 novembre prochain!

A la fin de la soirée, on entendait répéter, parmi les expressions d'intense satisfaction, cette demande avide: est-ce bien la dernière? Hélas! oui. Rassurez-vous, cependant, chers lecteurs et lectrices, qui aimez danser au City Swiss Club: votre attente n'ira pas jusqu'en novembre, puisque nous comptons bien vous retrouver au Brent Bridge Hotel, à notre réunion d'été par un beau mardi de juillet. L'on s'y est beaucoup amusé l'année dernière. J.Z.

### SCHWEIZERBUND.

The motto "A Home from Home" has always been associated with the Schweizerbund more than with any other club or institution in our Colony, and last Friday's (March 21st) Annual Dinner accentuated this well deserved appellation. Though an official function of this kind demands considerable work and preparation by those responsible for the arrangements the rigidity of the latter were in no way allowed to interfere with the comfort or curtail the fançes of those present: matters just "occurred" in a delightful manner. The official guests were received and presented in the committee room on the first floor where the alert secretary of the Club, Mr. P. Silvani, was assiduously administering the traditional "preliminaries." Time passed quickly in exchanging compliments and refreshing old memories and it was nine o'clock when it occurred to the president Mr. J. Christen, to suggest adjourning to the dinner timed for 7.30 in the large hall of the Club. The company therefore ranged itself into the customary bee-line formation according to precedence and filed into the banqueting room where they were eagerly awaited and applauded by the other less distinguished participants. Monsieur de Bourg, 1st Secretary of Legation, took the Chair and was accompanied by Mr. Hiliker, Chancellor of Legation.

After the two loyal toasts were suitably proposed and honoured, Mr. J. Christen, the president of the Club, rose and extended a hearty welcome to Monsieur de Bourg at this, the 51st Annual Banquet of the Club. He was also pleased to greet the many honorary members of the Club, amongst whom he noticed Messrs. Hohl, Wetter, Scheidegger, Durliwanger and Bernhard. The Club, Mr. Christen said, had during the last year continued to successfully fulfil its mission in the Colony. He regretted that on account of unexpected non-recurring expenses it had become indispensable to increase the prices of certain commodities but he hoped that they would soon be able to revert to normal conditions. He proposed the future prosperity of the Schweizerbund.

Mr. H. Caluori, the vice-president, in welcoming the official guests expressed the regret of the assembly at the unavoidable absence of the Swiss Minister but they had as his representative their great and he might even say their dear friend Monsieur de Bourg in the Chair. M. de Bourg had already on former occasions shown his attachment to the Club and he (the speaker) wished to assure him that they valued his friendship very highly. He was gratified to state that all the societies in the Colony had sent official delegates; they were:

*Secours Mutuels*: Mr. and Mrs. Martin; *City Swiss Club*: Mr. J. Zimmermann, and Mr. Georges Marchand; *Unione Ticinese*: Mr. Notari and Mr. Bicchii; *Union Helvétique*: Mr. Marfurt; *Swiss Mercantile Society*: Mr. and Mrs. Paschoud; *Swiss Gymnastic Society*: Mr. and Mrs. Schneeburger; *Swiss Choral Society*: Mr. Bommer; *Swiss Rifle Association*: Mr. Schmid; *Swiss Club, Birmingham*: Mr. P. Brun; *Schweizerkirche*: Pfarrer C. Th. Hahn; *Swiss Observer*: Mr. and Mrs. Boehringer.

M. M. Paschoud (President S.M.S.) replied to this toast. He always looked forward to the Annual Dinner of the Schweizerbund and he had this evening rushed home and nearly got his wife into hysterics by hurrying her on. When he had raced his car here and arrived at 7.50 he found his was the only car, still he hastened to the cloak room but when he found the latter devoid of the usual wares he had another look at his tickets just to make sure that he had come to the right place. However, when he reached the reception room with the array of cocktails he knew he was right. They had certainly succeeded in sharpening their appetites and he thanked the Club for their great hospitality.

M. de Bourg then rose and expressed his great pleasure at being present, a pleasure which he felt was his alone as the company must miss the presence of the Swiss Minister. M. Paravicini, whom official duties had prevented from coming along, asked him to convey to them patriotic greetings and best wishes for a successful evening, though his chief could scarcely doubt that this evening could be anything else. M. de Bourg added that an annual banquet always reminded him of a successful examination day. During the past year the committee had to work hard and study a good many subjects and he gathered from the president's speech that mathematics were their particular theme (laughter). They had earned full marks which was proved by the success of this evening. We were told, he continued, a lot about the duties of the Swiss abroad but to him the highest and the easiest was to congregate, meet together, talk about our great country and our national institutions and thus perpetuate amongst the rising generation in our Colony love and admiration for the home country. He felt there was no more suitable place for the achievement of this high task than the Schweizerbund. M. de Bourg's address was received with great applause and followed by the singing of "For he is a jolly good fellow."

Mr. P. Silvani, the Secretary of the Club, was in charge of the toast to "The Ladies." He wondered, in view of the attractive ways ladies were nowadays taught to exhibit or hide their charms, there were any bachelors left. He had evidently secured a good selection of jocular allusions but omitted to cloak them in a style suitable for the occasion. He was endeavouring to define a comparison of "raspberries and cream" but the allotment of these two attributes was too much for him and he became totally inarticulate. For a few minutes he gazed pale and sphinx-like at his audience but he recovered himself sufficiently, much to everybody's relief and delight, to propose the health of the Ladies.

Mr. Martin (President Secours Mutuels) also added a few words of thanks; he said his Society had shared the same roof with the Schweizerbund for a good many years to their mutual satisfaction and he hoped this close relationship would continue.

Mr. Pache, a former president and acting on this occasion as toast-master, enlarged on the reference in the president's speech to the Honorary Members. They had been named the "old bones" of the Club, he did not like the expression as it savoured of the mission of a familiar man in the street. "Boys of the Old Brigade" seemed to him a better designation; true, they were not associated with any historic charge but in the past they had done a good bit of fighting and saved the Club when trouble threatened. He singled out one particular member, Mr. Conrad Gentsch, who for the last 51 years was president of their Sick Society—a unique record—unfortunately illness prevented him from being present. Mr. Pache was followed by Mr. Wetter who asked the "boys of the old brigade" to drink to the prosperity of the Club.

Mr. Thommen surprised the gathering by suggesting that a joint dinner of all the clubs in the Colony should be arranged. He had learned that night that there were 14 clubs and he hoped that the respective secretaries would get busy in that direction straight away. Mr. Paschoud informed him that such a gathering was now in course of preparation and would take place on May 31st in honour of M. Paravicini, who had recently completed ten years as Swiss Minister in London.

M. Brun (Swiss Club, Birmingham) gave particulars of the International Cookery Exhibition which was being held in June at Zurich; he was arranging a special party of 500 from England and hoped that everybody present would join him. The cost of the trip was extremely moderate and he could promise a most enjoyable time.

Before concluding we wish to pay tribute to the excellence of the dinner which, considering the limited facilities at the disposal of the Steward, was no small achievement. The serried ranks of the diners rendered the approach of the waiters at times difficult and caused one of the latter to deluge himself with a shower of plates reminiscent of an air raid though the rations were little affected. However, all this was accepted in the best of spirits and enhanced the homeliness of the gathering.

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